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the latter been first occupied, it is doubtful whether the rocks and lagoons of the sea-board would ever have been settled. No man would have turned from the prairie-ward to the seamed slopes of the Atlantic edge. As it is, we have the energy and patience which the difficult soil of the East generates, with that magnificent sweep of Western territory which, had it been opened to us first, might, from its very luxuriousness, have generated among those occupying it an ignoble love of ease.

ART. IV.—1. *Les Parlements de France. Essai Historique.*

Par le VICOMTE DE BASTARD. Paris: Didier. 2 vols. 8vo.

2. *Robert Emmett.* Paris: Michel Levy. 12mo.

3. *Mémoires de l'Impératrice Joséphine.* Paris: Firmin Didot. 2 vols. 8vo.

4. *Études sur Pascal.* Par VICTOR COUSIN. Paris: Didier. 8vo.

5. *Fragments et Souvenirs.* Par VICTOR COUSIN. Paris: Didier. 8vo.

6. *La Tribune Moderne. Vie de Châteaubriand.* Par M. VILLEMAIN. Paris: Michel Levy. 8vo.

It seems a strange, and for that very reason it may not be an uninteresting study, to examine, at the very moment when France has almost ceased to have almost any liberties, what were the liberties she enjoyed from the thirteenth century up to the so-called great Revolution, and through the period when she was governed by what are usually denominated absolute, if not despotic monarchs.

When discussing, or in any way judging, the history of France, it is always necessary to separate her institutions from the manner in which they were administered, and from the men who administered them. It has been often remarked by statesmen, that nearly all institutions are in themselves good, and have failed only from the deficiencies of those in whose hands they were placed, and who had the duty of carrying them out. It is therefore, we think, somewhat a

mistake to inveigh against the *institutions* of France in past times, and to go on repeating, (as is too often done, especially in England,) that France never had any appetency for liberty, because she never had any opportunity in her form of government for judging what liberty really meant. The elements of what in England has now become irrevocably constitutional and representative government, were all contained in France two or three hundred years ago; but the utter want of moderation on the part of those who had the institutions of the country in charge, prevented them from producing their natural fruits, and compelled the nation to oscillate perpetually between two extremes, resulting from the victory of this party or that. The struggles we have witnessed in France, in modern times, "between the *ancien régime* and the Revolution," to use M. de Tocqueville's words,—that is, between anarchy and an exaggeration of the royal prerogative,—were as strong, though perhaps less fierce, when carried on, under another form, between the Parliaments and the crown; and in this struggle we find foreshadowed what were to be the future destinies, and indeed the future disasters, of France.

When the phrase "Parliamentary Government" is now used with regard to France, it is supposed to designate the men and the parties that have stood at the head of the French administration since 1789, and (barring the Empire) until 1851. Never was a greater error. France has never known what is meant by the genuineness and integrity of parliamentary power, and above all of *representative* government, since the decree for the suppression of the parliaments in the middle of the last century; for *since* that period, the same elements for the necessary balancing of forces have never existed.

Let our readers on this side the Atlantic understand, that we are not speaking from their point of view; for it would be radically impossible to do so with regard to an "old-world" kingdom of the European continent. The "old-world" point of view, and, in a certain degree, "old-world policy," are alone admissible, when judging of France. Therefore, our political philosophy upon this head must be received as relative, rather than absolute.

The origin of monarchy in France is a double one, — judicial

no less than military; and the first French kings were both judges and captains. The French are said to be a "nation of soldiers," and there is undoubtedly truth in the saying; but if ever a nation of *plaideurs* existed, the French is that nation also. An old author says of his countrymen:—

"The French are so essentially litigious, so naturally given to law-suits and pleadings, that their kings have been obliged to establish more parliaments, courts, and special jurisdictions, and a greater number of judges, than are to be found in all the other countries of Europe. And this inordinate number of judges and jurisdictions has produced ten times as many advocates, procurators, solicitors, and other men of law, who, in order that they may gain a goodly livelihood, provoke and foment such a host of actions and suits, that, in all France, there exists nothing that is not matter for litigation."

Now it may be said, that the entire legal history of this most litigious people is contained in M. de Bastard's two volumes upon the parliamentary history of France; and from this point of view it is one of the most curious works that have been published for several years, and one which the historical student cannot possibly ignore.

From the thirteenth century till the eighteenth, France was, to the full, as much governed by her parliaments as by the crown; and all the liberties of the individual, as of the nation, were guaranteed by those *grandes compagnies*, as they were denominated, over which the royal authority could exercise no intimidation, and in regard to which corruption was of no possible avail. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are full of the struggle between the parliaments and the crown; and here we have occasion to recur to the observation made at the outset, namely, that want of moderation is the cause of all the political failures of France. The parliamentary institutions of France, during the entire ascendancy of the *ancien régime*, were about as well adapted to the national character as anything one can imagine. They united in themselves the facilities for just the degree of freedom and of governmental influence combined which the French race is capable of supporting; and they were framed with such wise elasticity, that, had they endured, they might easily have been made to correspond subsequently to all the exigencies of an improved age,

and of a people more advanced in political education. But they did not endure, because they could not; and they were incapable of enduring, because the exaggeration of right and authority, on the part of those to whom the working of the parliamentary machinery was intrusted, was so great, that it provoked a corresponding exaggeration in the crown; and the consequence was a determined struggle, in which the parliaments carried things so far, and with so high a hand, that in self-defence the crown could do nothing else than suppress them. The day of their suppression was a fatal day for France; but the parliaments themselves did everything in their power to make any other result impossible. It is often regretted that France (constituted as she is) has no aristocratic class which can, as in England, interpose between the people and the crown, and, while protecting either from the usurpations of the other, prevent both from aspiring to any exclusive concentration or possession of absolute power. France had two sources whence such an aristocracy might have sprung,—her *noblesse d'épée* and her *noblesse de robe*. Her army and her magistracy might each have given her the guardians of her freedom against the encroachments of the mob or of the crown. The first attempt at anything of the sort was made by the *noblesse* of the sword, and was found intolerable; for instead of serving as a counterbalancing force, the French feudal nobility dreamed of little else than of oppression on its own account, and for its own profit. Instead of shielding both the people and the crown, it threatened both, and rendered itself impossible. Richelieu saw this at a glance, and destroyed the military *noblesse*; but Richelieu died before he had constructed anything in the place of the power that was destroyed, and the crown and the people were left face to face with each other, with nothing between them to deaden the blows they might one day chance to deal upon each other. The sword being found to have been comparatively useless, politically speaking, and in the formation of a genuine aristocracy, the gown remained. How near the gown was to furnishing France with an upright, conscientious, deserving, hard-working, and liberal aristocracy, it is worth our reading M. de Bastard's book in order to

see. Two things in the volumes before us are particularly striking to those who have made the civilization of France their study, — the education of youth in the parliamentary centres of the country under the *ancien régime*, and the system favoring the absorption of the inferior by the superior classes, a feature hitherto thought by no means characteristic of the social constitution of the Gallo-Roman races. With regard to the former, nothing is better worth attention than the description given by M. de Bastard of what the youth of the French parliamentary families were, some hundred and fifty or two hundred years ago.

“The parliamentary youth of France,” he observes, “were delivered from idle habits, and that uncertainty of the future which, at the present day, discourages so many, — being early in life incorporated into the ranks of the magistracy, and having thus the time and means afforded them of treading in the steps of their elders. The right of judging (*droit d'opiner*) was not, however, awarded to these young men till after several years of toil and experience; and the system adopted with regard to the variety of courts in nearly all the parliaments, operated well for the educating of future magistrates.”

There is no doubt that this was the inducement for a very considerable portion of the upper and middle classes in France to obtain an education such as no class in the country has been in the habit of receiving since, and such as fitted those who did obtain it to place themselves profitably at the head of the country, and to aid in the work of guiding its destinies by framing and applying its laws. In innumerable cases the young men (sons and relatives of magistrates) who entered actively upon an official career were too young to be able to assume any responsibility; frequently, habitually even, lads of seventeen were accepted as successors of their fathers or uncles; but, although they became immediately partakers in all the labors of the courts in which they took their seats thus early, they did not, as M. de Bastard observes, acquire the right of “judging” their fellow-citizens, but prepared themselves for the period when this “right” should be awarded them.

Napoleon I. was so thoroughly well aware of the greatness and high morality of the old parliamentary families of the

ancien régime, and of the weight such a class ought to possess in the state, that he aimed at re-constituting a sort of legal aristocracy, or a species of legal *caste*, by the establishment of what he termed the *Judicial Novitiate*, by means of which the younger relations of magistrates and high judicial functionaries should hold it as an honor to tread in the steps of their elders, and should prepare themselves, through a series of years, for the occupancy of the places in which their predecessors had done credit to their names, and good service to their country. But, like all regulations framed merely by the hand of man, and not reposing in any way upon the habits and manners of the people, this "judicial novitiate" produced nothing beyond a few isolated families, and vanished, leaving no trace, after the fall of Napoleon, in 1815. The parliamentary families of pre-Revolutionary France were a caste, because the parliaments were a power, and represented the local organization of free, and then uncentralized France. With the gradual growth of centralization, and the destruction of the parliamentary centres, these families ceased to represent anything; and the legal youth of France, if we may so call them, instead of helping to form what the English have, aptly enough, of late years termed the "governing classes," would simply have been required to swell the army of public functionaries, remunerated by the central authority, and subject to a despotic will. From this the descendants of the ancient and time-honored judicial houses of France revolted; and Napoleon's "judicial novitiate" failed to create anything in the shape of a class or caste.

We repeat that, in the face of the truly deplorable condition to which the youth of France (especially in the superior ranks) have now sunk, — a condition of which foreigners even can be good judges, from the tone of the stage, of literature, and of the press in that country, — it is assuredly interesting for the philosophical or historical student to perceive what was the radical, the almost incredible difference, caused by national institutions and habits, in the same race, one hundred and fifty or two hundred years ago.

The other point to which we alluded is equally important, and touches equally upon one of the peculiarities of the

Gallo-Roman civilization; namely, the absorption of the inferior by the superior classes.

In France and Germany (and in the former — will it be believed? — more even than in the latter) there has been a tendency to social stagnation. Wherever it is contrary to the national manners, habits, and feelings to believe that what is new can be equally excellent with what is old, there will be witnessed what we have termed the tendency to stagnation, — namely, the tendency to imagine that a certain social superiority can be the privilege only of a small number. This is the case in France more than in any other Continental country; less, as we know, in England than in any country in Europe. The consequence is, that, while England counts the most numerous aristocracy of any nation in Europe, France, on the contrary, has a nobility that is every day dying out. The curious thing is, that, as ideas enlarge, and as the progress of the entire world becomes in nearly every respect more manifest, France shuts herself up more and more in her antiquated notions. The farther off she is from the origin of all superiority, therefore of all *aristocracy* in its real sense, namely, from merit, which is the source of all distinction, — the farther off her noble races are from this, the more they seem resolved to immure themselves in the past only, and to refuse to recognize the rights of actual living and breathing merit. The proof that this is the case is the peculiar feeling of the enemies of all social distinctions in France. Ask any avowed revolutionist, from Brest to Marseilles, what he thinks of some count or marquis whose father was a carpet-maker or an ironmonger, and mark with what exquisite contempt he will treat him as “being nobody at all,” — as being a pretender, and not “the real thing.” He hates the Montmorencys and La Tremouilles and La Rochefoucaulds, and the whole set of men, from first to last, whom he looks upon as the representatives of a superior order. But the curious feature of the case is, that he never denies their being something that he can never be; and this is the very reason for which he would have them all suppressed. The Anglo-Saxon feeling is a very different one. An English “Radical” or democrat will tell you, “One man is worth

another." He makes no difference between Lord Lyndhurst, whose father was a painter, and Lord Arundel, whose ancestors figured in the Crusades; between a Wellesley and a Talbot, except that, of these two, the former appears to him immeasurably greater than the latter. His sentiment of equality is the true one, for it is based upon the recognition of individual merit; whereas the Frenchman has become stagnant to such a degree, that he esteems no nobility valid, that of birth excepted; and not being able to give himself the long line of ancestors he regards as indispensable, he would sweep from the earth every man who does not date from yesterday, avowing thereby that, in his mind, ancestral descent does alone constitute nobility. It is impossible to comprehend many of the characteristics of the French race, or indeed thoroughly to penetrate all the causes of its frequent revolutions (far more social than political), unless the peculiarities we here allude to be minutely studied. But this feeling of exclusiveness was by no means so prevalent two centuries ago as it now is; and strangely enough, at the time when nobility of birth was in the highest enjoyment of its highest privileges, the nobility of merit was the most easily obtained, and the most widely honored on all hands.

"The establishment and growth of families in our ancient cities," says M. de Bastard, "is one of the most interesting facts that have to be studied in the formation of society in France. It is a fact to be studied everywhere in the parliamentary centres. Few things are more admirable than this organization of society in past times in France. The work of transformation was slow, but surely progressive and ascendant; and the labors of each individual raised a whole generation above the generation immediately preceding it, while, however, to rise in the social scale, the toil of a life was often necessary."

The author of the work before us shows us this slow, but perpetual, work of transformation going on in such cities as Toulouse, and in those where the parliaments held their sittings; and he refers us to other writers, who have noted how incessantly this progress towards the establishment of a practical and rational aristocracy continued in the capital. An interesting statistical work might be made upon the gradual formation in Paris of what are now termed "noble

ances," whose origin was as follows. A stranger (for few of the high Parisian families had Parisians for their founders) fixed himself in the capital, at some early period, as a shop-assistant, and perhaps himself became a shop-keeper; his descendants successively attained to the positions of town councillor, *echevin*, notary, lawyer, *conseiller au chatelet*, substitute of the *procureur général*, king's advocate, parliamentary counsellor, president of a court of inquiry, *avocat général*, *président à mortier*; and thus, in four or five generations, the descendant of the shop-assistant is the equal of many of the highest-born lords of the land. "It would be easy," says M. de Bastard, "to quote names in plenty in support of what is here alleged." But this readiness to admit merit as the determining cause of rank (without which admission there is no possibility of forming a political aristocracy) began to slacken by degrees, as the old *noblesse* of birth came to be less deserving, and to arrogate by mere privilege what it perhaps felt itself becoming incapable of winning by merit. With the Revolution of 1789-93, all the really liberal opinions and sentiments that are to be recognized in the various classes of Frenchmen in the seventeenth century disappear, and make way for narrow-mindedness of every kind and description, under the disguise of the loftiest-sounding names. The two classes became two *castes*, and were distinguished only for their rank hatred of each other; the plebeians demanding the total destruction of the *noblesse*, and the *noblesse* refusing now to owe any distinction save to a source unattainable by their enemies, that is, to ancient birth.

Our generation, and indeed that which preceded ours, have had no opportunity of judging in France of anything save of what has been the direct product of the Revolution; therefore, this violent antagonism between patricians and plebeians is one of the social and political features which to our eyes particularly characterize the French nation. It is consequently of the deepest interest to find authentic documentary evidence of the long and well-established existence of a diametrically opposite order of things; and here is one of the reasons for which we recommend to all historical

students a serious perusal of M. de Bastard's History of the Parliaments of France.

From the now extinct twelve parliaments of Gaul, to the last Irish Parliament previous to the Union, it may perhaps be said that the transition is not a very abrupt one; but in the little volume entitled *Robert Emmett*, and semi-anonymously presented to the Parisian public, what concerns the Parliament of Dublin is by far the least important part of the whole work. Before proceeding further, let us explain the term "semi-anonymously." In Paris, when the volume referred to was on the eve of publication, early in the present year, rumors, at first vague, began to circulate as to its authorship, and the name of M. de Rémusat (the younger, the author of several clever articles in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*) was pronounced very generally. But a few days sufficed to clear up the mystery, and to put all Paris in possession of the name of the writer of a book, the subject of which was utterly unknown to ninety-nine hundredths of those who were preparing to discuss it. Therefore we venture to say, that, though *Robert Emmett* bears no name upon its title-page, it is but a semi-anonymous production; for throughout every fraction of Parisian society, of no matter what opinions, the question addressed by most men to their neighbors has been, "Have you read Madame d'Haussonville's book, and what do you think of it?"

If ever "fair lady" had a right to publish a book, the author of the little volume in question has that right indubitably. Madame la Comtesse d'Haussonville is the granddaughter of Madame de Staël, — the daughter of the Duc de Broglie, and of his beautiful, accomplished, excellent, and far-famed duchess, Albertine de Staël. The Duchesse de Broglie, at her premature demise, left three children, — the distinguished writer, Prince Albert de Broglie, whose works have contributed not a little to enrich the political and constitutional department of French history; another son, now in the navy; and Mademoiselle de Broglie, now the wife of Count d'Haussonville, the author of several esteemed productions, and latterly of an excellent History of Lorraine. It will be acknowledged that Madame d'Haussonville could

hardly escape an author's fate. The book she has just brought out is one not very easy to judge of, — one whose merits are rather negative than positive, and the originality of which consists above all in what its author does not say. This may require explanation. Nothing would have been so easy as to launch out into declamation without end on England and the revolutionary movements of 1798. Madame d'Haussonville's great merit is, that, from the beginning to the end of her book, there is not a declamatory line. She might have said a vast deal more than she has; she might have said all she has said differently. Would the book have gained thereby? Some there are who unhesitatingly say, Yes; others, who dogmatically say, No. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that these opposite opinions belong to the two so widely opposite schools which divide the modern literature of France. On the one side stand the partisans of what the English press has recently undertaken to ridicule as "fine writing," — the artists who maintain that emotion is produced by the manner and form of expression, by its poetry and imagery; on the other are placed the champions of "sobriety," as it is called, — those who affirm emotion to be dependent upon the fact, and not upon the manner in which it is expressed. It is the old quarrel over again of *Classiques* and *Romantiques*, — of the colorists, and of those who love only the sharp, pure outline. Madame d'Haussonville's book is fitted to enchant the classic school, and drives to despair the votaries of romantic art. To us the book has another and utterly different interest; and we are almost surprised that our point of view has not struck more of those French critics who have analyzed it, and expatiated upon it for the benefit of the French public.

The most singular feature of the work is its coming from the granddaughter of Madame de Staël. A more unequivocal condemnation of all the vain, frothy, rhapsodical rhetoric of *Corinne* is nowhere to be found than in the mathematically precise, dignified, and somewhat frigid prose of *Robert Emmett*. "Good heavens!" was the first exclamation of a famous Parisian critic, "where has all the grandmother's enthusiasm flown to? What has become of her *Lyrics*? Out of all the orchestra of poetic instruments that sigh and

wail through Madame de Staël's works of fiction, not so much as the echo of an Æolian harp is to be found in her grandchild's book!" This is true; and the "Lyre" of *Corinne* would seem in the eyes of Madame d'Haussonville to be as *rococo* as the too famous yellow turban which has grown to be identified with the features of her illustrious grandmother, and which gives them (to those who have seen only her portrait) such a harsh, forbidding, intensely unpleasant air. That, up to a certain point, Madame d'Haussonville has judged soundly of this, we think there can be little doubt; the Lyrics of *Corinne* (which, after all, — we beg Madame de Staël's pardon for saying it, — were only the necessary consequence of the false, declamatory tone of the Empire) — the Lyrics of *Corinne* are completely out of date; and we are grateful to the author of *Robert Emmett* for not having treated her public to any "harp-music," even when on the subject of Sarah Curran, who has been far too much "sung" by Moore in his *Irish Melodies*, and only once properly dealt with, and sketched, in the *chiar' oscuro* tints that befitted her, by our own Washington Irving, in his exquisite *Broken Heart*. But between the "Lyrics" of the school personified in Chateaubriand and Madame de Staël, and the total absence of all emotion, there is a distance wide enough to admit of something that shall keep clear of both exaggerations. We are not quite sure that we should not wish the tragic tale of Robert Emmett — the patriot of twenty-three years of age, who loved Ireland perhaps "not wisely, but too well," and who, at all events, paid the price of his imprudence with his life — to be told with more feeling, and less as though the narrator were merely registering a succession of facts that could not by any means enlist her sympathies on either side. Such a desire may be very weak on our part; but we confess that, after reading this most correctly written, yet to us unsatisfactory volume, we were inclined to echo the exclamation made by a child, to whom, in Berlin, the splendid *Grisaille* mural pictures of Cornelius were shown, and their extraordinary beauties explained: "May be! but I wish there were live people in them!" Here, in our mind, is the defect of Madame d'Haussonville's book. It

is, in its pure, cold outlines, an estimable, nay, a remarkable work of art; but it is not the fit record of the deeds and thoughts of those who loved what they loved so passionately as to die for it. It is wanting in life, and therefore in truth. It fails in animation, because it was composed by a writer perpetually afraid of becoming exaggerated or heroic. Madame d'Haussonville is possessed by a natural, and perhaps salutary, dread of what, in his book on Pascal, M. Cousin calls "that poetic prose, the fatal sign of a literature verging on decay, which, at the end of the last and at the commencement of the present century, made its appearance in France"; but she has fallen into the contrary extreme.

The very faults of this little semi-romantic, semi-historical volume upon Robert Emmett prepare us for a better appreciation of M. Cousin's untiring efforts to maintain French prose at the height to which it was raised by the great authors and thinkers of the seventeenth century. It may not be excessive to say, that no man in our age has done so much for the French language as Cousin. While withstanding every effort made by the so-called *Romantiques* to alter the character of that tongue, by the sudden assimilation of elements wholly foreign to its nature, he has at the same time, by his own example and by his commentaries on others, victoriously proved that there is no passion, however intense, no sentiment, however sublime, to the expression of which French prose is not perfectly adequate. To quote M. Cousin's own words: —

"England and Germany, Italy and Spain, have poets equal and often superior to ours. Imagination, the charming and dangerous muse, is, and always has been, somewhat strange to us, and we make up for her coyness by imitation of the most laboriously extravagant kind. But in prose no nation of modern times has any writers that at all approach ours."

This assertion is so true, that the conscientious student of various tongues will, if he identify himself successively with one idiom after another, be obliged to confess that, were there any hope of ever translating Tacitus without losing the energy, conciseness, and precision of the original, the one only language in which the attempt could be made would be

the French. Goethe — the master of all form and style, the arch-lapidary of modern times, the fashioner of words, who never rested so long as the expressions found were not exactly adequate to the impression received, and in turn to be conveyed — felt so profoundly this superiority of French prose, that, after he had transformed his own redundant idiom, compressing it till he tortured it into something like conciseness, he had in the latter years of his life but one perpetual exclamation upon his lips: “Ah! if I could but write my thoughts in French!”

Of all the great prose-writers who flourished in France in her most illustrious age, the seventeenth century, none offers so many deeply interesting points to the study of both the linguist and the philosopher as Pascal. It is not, therefore, astonishing, that such a thinker and such a writer as Cousin should be attracted and held captive by such a writer and such a thinker as Pascal.

“The peculiar qualities of Pascal’s prose,” he writes, “are all but impossible to define; and the power of feeling them even can be gained only by the most assiduous communication with the genius of him who wrote. Pascal’s style is, above all, an exquisite mixture of *naïveté* and grandeur. It is by turns full of familiar simplicity and of the strongest poetic inspiration, without ever falling into affected negligence, — that worst of affectations, — or into the vulgar amalgamation of two opposite styles, whence is derived what is now termed *poetical prose*. Pascal stayed but a short time upon earth; but however rapidly he passed away, during his quick passage he had a distinct vision of Perfect Beauty; he attached himself to it with all the power of his mind and of his heart, and let nothing escape from his hands that did not bear its indelible sign. Such was in him the passion for the Perfect, that it is notorious that he wrote *thirteen times over* the seventeenth *Provinciale*!”

Here we interrupt our quotation for what seems an absolutely necessary remark, — necessary to the perfect comprehension of both Pascal and M. Cousin. In what regards the mere expression, the outward form of all art, as in what regards the conception or idea to be expressed, there are two schools; — one, that of inspiration; the other, that of reflection. The latter tells you, with Boileau and Voltaire, that a

work must be "woven and rewoven" fifty times before it is fit to be given to the public, and that apparent facility is to be won only by untiring toil; the former asserts, with Goethe, that, do what you will, "you will never win the road to others' hearts, if what you say does not spring from your own." The generality of authors in all times and tongues are divisible into these two categories;—those who grow tiresome and pretentious from perpetually retouching their work, because they are wholly preoccupied with its outside, while of inside there is little or none; and those who grow vague, declamatory, and incomprehensible, because they pour forth at once all they fancy their inspiration commands them to pour forth, and because in reality they are in wild pursuit of their own idea, which they have never yet positively caught, or been able to hold fast. Yet the clear-sighted, mathematical, but intensely-inspired Pascal,—the man so full of strange contradictions that in childhood he re-discovered Euclid's problems, proving them as Euclid had done,* and having, by what was strongest in him, reason, attained to the highest range of Christian faith, cast reason from him as an illegitimate ground of belief,—the man whose strong, *painful* sense of poetry comes from the same sources whence Shakespeare derived his,—the man whom no human weakness escapes and whom no human loftiness can surprise, and who would appear, from the dawn of youth upward, to have had every one of his feelings immediately accountable to himself, and therefore immediately *expressible*;—this man, Pascal, wrote the seventeenth *Provinciale* thirteen times over! Why? Was he not sure, before taking pen in hand, of what he meant to say? Did he, like secondary spirits, doubt whether he intended to express this or that? Or was he, could he be, preoccupied by the mere puerilities of the outward grace and charm of this, rather than that, expression? No! Pascal here is still the same as ever,—proud, uneasy, toiling to reach another species of faith than that he possesses, disdaining all literary fame and all purely literary art,—wholly,

* It will be remembered that, when twelve years old, Pascal *invented* (for he had no previous knowledge of them) the thirty-two propositions of the first book of the "Elements."

exclusively, incomparably himself, and for ever searching throughout the entire world of linguistic forms for that which should the most perfectly, the most inevitably, embody his thought. "The Perfect" of which Cousin speaks as being the object of Pascal's ceaseless passion, is that through which he — the finite creature of an infinite Creator — can manifest himself the most clearly, and by the utmost amount of truth in outward form and phrase convey to other minds the strongest impression of the True. Seen from this point of view, all Pascal's perpetual alterations of the text of his manuscripts are not only explicable, they are necessary. But the discovery of these alterations, and therefore of one of the most interesting traits of Pascal's individuality, is owing solely to M. Cousin; and we in the nineteenth century should be less capable of judging one of the mightiest manifestations of intellect it has pleased Providence to send to our earth, if a kindred genius had not been found, who, like the immortal thinker of the *Pensées*, feels respect and admiration for an author only "so far as he is the complete and sincere expression of a man."

Not only has M. Cousin, as the issue of his long labors, re-established the original text of the *Pensées*, which he gives us in his present volume, but the public owes to him the discovery of a document that completes Pascal from another point of view. Some fifteen years ago, in studying the catalogue of manuscripts in the library of St. Germain des Prés, M. Cousin, then a peer of France, just released from the duties of the Ministry of Public Instruction, and laden with the activities and honors of parliamentary and political life, happened to have his attention called to a mass of manuscript papers, containing, according to their title-page, "Writings by Nicole, Pascal, and St. Evremond." Impatiently he turned to the leaves thus marked, and discovered nothing less than a *Discours sur les Passions de l'Amour*, by the man in whose whole life no trace had as yet been found of any passionate feeling for a being of the other sex.

"Of all the discoveries we had made, or could make, touching Pascal, this was assuredly the least expected," observes M. Cousin. And he adds: "It is a totally different phase of the life so early spent that lies here opened to our inspection. The pages here rescued from obliv-

ion would seem more fittingly to emanate from the Hôtel Rambouillet, than from Port Royal. The subject of them is love!—the *passion* of love!—not mystical or divine love, but the love of the earth, with its long train of grandeurs and misfortunes. Nay, even if I am to say all I feel upon this most strange document, I must own that, at times, I can fancy that beneath my hand I catch, as it were, the beatings of a yet unquiet heart; and there is a chaste, yet tender emotion throughout the whole of the passages where the charms of an '*exalted friendship*' are described, which is to me the secret echo and the involuntary revelation of a passion that Pascal had himself experienced. Pascal *never* wrote a line save under the impulse of an irresistible sentiment, the weight whereof he lessened by expressing it. With him *the man creates, and alone instigates the writer*; and, if I am not much deceived, the *discourse* in question betrays, in the inmost consciousness of Pascal, a mystery which may perhaps never be wholly explained."

It is certain that the discovery of this document was an event in France. Of course, at first, those who are wont to doubt everything pretended to doubt its authenticity; but little by little it made its way, and at the end of a few years it was admitted on all hands to be the production of the same pen that had written the *Pensées* and the *Provinciales*. Material proof of its genuineness was found in the end; but had this failed, M. Cousin's reasoning remains sound. "If not Pascal's, *whose could it be?*" Nearly every one, in the seventeenth century, however great, is imitable, *except* Pascal; "but where," save in him, very properly asks M. Cousin, "could be traced that ardent and haughty air, that wonderful amount of passion and of sense, that language at once so lofty and so insinuating, that accent, that tone which is to be recognized from among a million?" It rests, therefore, with the French public to thank the continuator of Descartes, the translator of Plato, the reviver of really Christian and spiritual philosophy in France, for having restored to the literature of the country one of the most precious of all its gems. Nor is it only the French public that is thus indebted. A farther insight into any one of those bright, deep, individual intellects in which it has pleased the Almighty to "glass himself in power," is a service rendered to the world at large; and for the discovery of what a mind like Pascal's conceived of the

passion of love, all those should be grateful to M. Cousin who, instead of being merely bound within the narrow limits of national distinctions, are citizens of God's infinite, eternal universe of thought.

After this volume has been attentively perused, a more correct and complete notion of M. Cousin himself will be attained by the reader, who will thus be better prepared to appreciate the merits and the interest of the *Fragments et Souvenirs*, which constitutes perhaps the first book in which the illustrious philosopher enters personally into communication with the public, and treats, not of his opinions or of his systems, but of himself. As such, this last volume is one of extraordinary attractiveness, and possesses an intimate charm, which may be sought in vain in any of the writer's more abstract, and perhaps profounder publications. The *Souvenirs d'Allemagne* are the record of the impression made by the land of Goethe and Herder, of Kant and Fichte, upon the youthful imagination of him who, thirty years later, was to give to the world that impression modified, but not effaced, in the world-famous treatise entitled *Du Vrai, du Beau, et du Bien*. The "Studies upon the Style of Jean Jacques Rousseau" are the result of the sensations through which the author himself passed, before arriving at the grandly simple style he has now made so peculiarly his own; they tell, as it were, of the strong poetical emotions of early years. But, above all, what appears to us most precious in the whole volume is the essay upon M. de Santa Rosa. The hero of this sketch was a Piedmontese statesman, an exile from Italy for having been too devoted to Italy's weal; and the pages devoted to him by M. Cousin are the narrative of the strong affection, founded on mutual confidence and esteem, which bound together these two magnanimous natures. It is impossible to give any analysis of this chapter of the *Fragments*; it must be read, and we are convinced no one will read it once who will not recur to it over and over again, and rejoice in having, through its pages so warm from the heart, penetrated into the intimacy of a far more than illustrious, — of a truly great man.

If it is interesting to note the opinions of a mind like Pas-

cal's upon the passion of love, how intensely curious is it to mark the influence of that passion itself upon a man whose whole life is one of action, and whose preoccupations are those of ambition and of conquest! For some few years past, and especially since the appearance of a sort of half-finished (and certainly very imperfectly written) romance, published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, it has been the fashion to say that there was more of genuine *sentiment* in the first Emperor's character than had ever been supposed. Now that the Memoirs of the Empress Josephine have appeared, and in them the minute and voluminous correspondence comprising the letters interchanged by the hero of Marengo and Austerlitz with his bride, our only subject of surprise is, that any doubt should ever have existed as to the passionate nature of Napoleon Bonaparte. No correspondence celebrated for its depth of passion only, no reciprocation of glowing thoughts and vows, can surpass, in the intensity of its ardor, the correspondence of General Bonaparte with his wife, Josephine de Beauharnais. Jean Jacques, Petrarch, and Shakespeare even, can never aspire to be more than the equals of the great Corsican; and there is in the rhapsodies of this warlike lover a something which no fiction, however magnificent, can quite compass. The fire of the Southern sun scorches through every line which the separated husband addresses to his wife, and the imagination and heart are so confounded in the temperament of the young warrior, that, as he loves really with all his faculties, there is truth in his wildest fancies, and poetry in the smallest and most realistic details of his attachment.

The story of Napoleon and Josephine is a singular one, and pre-eminently illustrative of Byron's theory:—

“Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation.”

The young hero of Toulon had had no mistress save glory, and of what might be the object of his infinite aspirations, under another form than warlike renown, he knew nothing. The flame was in him, but it smouldered; for it had as yet found nothing to devour. Why Josephine Tascher, the widowed Marquise de Beauharnais, should have been the precise object selected by fate to ignite all that was combustible in a

nature whose very element was fire, would be a question worthy the research of all the philosophers and psychologists in the universe. Yet so it was. Madame de Beauharnais was several years older than her lover. She was graceful, as are most Creoles; but not only had she no claims to what is usually termed beauty, but there were certain details of her appearance which might have been the very reverse of attractive. To all she wanted, the future Emperor was apparently blind; what she possessed, or what his fancy recognized in her, inspired him with absolute idolatry. It was the earliest invasion of human, earthly passion, in a soul that had been all-absorbed by abstract ideas. From first to last,—taking even her own letters as the proof,—Josephine is inferior to Napoleon. We will not seek to establish here the fact of her frailty, nor is it to this that we allude when we speak of her inferiority. She is inferior in the truth and in the measure of the affection with which she repays the love poured out at her feet. She here and there seems so thoroughly aware of this, that she strives to exaggerate, and to represent what she does not feel. The effect is not favorable, and the spectator at this distance of time is astonished that it could deceive him for whom it was invented. When, in her letters to her husband, Madame Bonaparte seeks to alter her usual tone, and to assume one that shall better correspond with the missives of flame she receives from him, she ceases to be either natural or sincere. She is not less cold, but less modest; not less frivolous, but less graceful. Whereas it is to be remarked that, on the side of Napoleon, (as happens almost invariably with a really intense passion,) the expression in which the lava-like flood of his idolatry is conveyed is always pure and chaste.

These volumes help perhaps further to a conclusion as to what Bonaparte's nature really was, than all the profound treatises which the most learned civil or military historians have ever written or will ever write. If it be so, we confess that, philosophically speaking, the Attila of our age would gain considerably in our esteem; and while condemning his later acts none the less, we might be inclined to ask how far their cause may be accepted by the Universal Judge as an extenuation. "No man," Herder

used to say, "has a right to outstep the boundaries of humanity"; and it is certain that whenever one does so, he rushes into a chaos of crime or of weakness. But how, if the most intensely fervent human feelings were the origin? How, if the most boundless love man ever felt,—how, if that love, one day betrayed, were the reason of all the madness? This does not alter the acts, but it alters their meaning as regards the perpetrator. There is in all this a mystery which we will not attempt to dive into or clear up. A day came, the whole world knows it, when Napoleon Bonaparte was the scourge of humanity, and when his conduct with regard to the purest women was atrocious, from its cynicism and brutality; yet, only a few short years before, there was *one* woman to whom he wrote: "I know nothing, care nothing, for glory; every single act of my life has *you only* for its object." We do not say that the Empress Josephine's Memoirs entirely explain Bonaparte's character, but we recommend all those to study them who desire to unravel some of the strings by which this vast mind was moved.

As we have already had occasion to remark, the Emperor Napoleon has, directly or indirectly, furnished material for an entire modern literature in France; and perhaps the work we have just quoted, concerning the Empress Josephine, is the only one in which, upon the whole, the Charlemagne of our days is shown in a favorable light. In nearly all the other histories, biographies, memoirs, and *souvenirs*, whether compiled by enemies or by friends, by authors military or civil, the tyrant so outbalances the hero even, and the hero is often, to use M. de Narbonne's phrase, so thoroughly "midway between Olympus and Bedlam," that in the despotism the glory is well-nigh lost, and the giddiness to which ambition rose shocks us by the total oblivion it induced of all justice and all principle.

M. Villemain's new work, *La Tribune Moderne*, will not help to place Napoleon Bonaparte upon an eminence, in the eyes of those politicians and philosophers who believe that right is in the end stronger than force, and who hold, with Carlyle, that "two wrongs will never make one right." The act of the Emperor's life which, from its date and its conse-

quences, most preoccupies the eloquent writer of the work under our eyes, is the one darkest stain upon his earlier career, the deed of violence and treachery that severed him irreparably from all that was upright, high-minded, and independent in the French nation, — the murder of the Duc d'Enghien. This most unpardonable act it was that cost the Emperor the secession from his service of Chateaubriand, than whom at that moment he could scarcely have lost a better adherent; and with regard to Chateaubriand himself, the resolution to secede from the empire may be said to have formed the turning-point in his destiny, and to have caused the whole of his later existence to be what it was.

There were anomalies in Chateaubriand's character that would perhaps have better fitted him to be the agent of a great chief like Bonaparte, than the minister of legitimate kings. An aristocrat to the very backbone, he had, at the same time, lived long enough in our backwoods to dislike intensely the conventionalities of aristocratic courts, and the laws of etiquette which, under the rule of a Bourbon, made him necessarily subordinate in a thousand ways to a Montmorency or a Perigord. A poet in grain (and none the less so that he was steeped in selfishness), there was in the individuality of Bonaparte something dazzling, unconventional, strange, which attracted irresistibly the author of *René*. "He had not been what he was had *the Muse* not been there," he remarked of the Emperor; and no doubt Chateaubriand's imagination was more naturally charmed, and a hundred times more easily compelled, by the adventurous young Corsican, in whom he asked nothing better than to see another Alexander, than by the formal brothers of Louis XVI., before whom he afterwards bowed down as before the representatives of a principle, in which it may be fairly questioned whether he sincerely believed.

Not only is M. Villemain's book extremely curious from the profound insight it gives us into the character of Chateaubriand, but it is still more interesting from certain peculiarities it forces us to note in that of the Emperor, and from the description it gives of the juxtaposition in which, for so many years, stood the monarch and the earliest in date of the many

illustrious writers who adorned the annals of French literature during the first thirty years of the present century. The Emperor and M. de Chateaubriand were never indifferent to each other, although it may be disputed whether Napoleon was at first sight attracted towards Chateaubriand in the irresistible fashion the latter would, by his *Mémoires d'Outre Tombe*, induce the public to believe. Let that be as it may, after he had had his attention once called to the young royalist writer, there is no doubt that Bonaparte was exceedingly anxious to attach him to the imperial government; and this was accomplished through the intervention of M. de Fontanes, then Grand Master of the University, and a little later President of the Legislative Corps. The *Génie du Christianisme*, with its celebrated episodes of *Atala*, *Les Natchez*, and others, had already appeared, and its author's fame was great. He was despatched to Rome in the capacity of secretary of embassy to Cardinal Fesch, the Emperor's uncle, and at that period ambassador from France to the Papal See. What ensued was not difficult to foresee. Chateaubriand's personal importance was too considerable to allow of his coming to a sufficiently cordial understanding with his superior, whose talents were by no means on a level with his position. This was the cause of endless bickerings and annoyances, and nothing is more curious than to read the *notes* addressed by the secretary to the Emperor, in which he sneers at the ambassador's want of intelligence and dignity, and by the ambassador to his imperial nephew, in which he abuses his secretary without mercy, going so far as to call him an *intrigant*, and to add: "Cet intrigant est tout de même un méchant homme!" The mutual situation of the subaltern and the chief grew to be absolutely insupportable; and before a year was past, M. de Fontanes wrote to M. de Chateaubriand, informing him that the Emperor had appointed him Minister of France to the little Swiss République du Valais, then newly recognized. The secretary hastened back from Rome to Paris, desired Madame de Chateaubriand to join him, and was preparing for his mission, when, a few days only before his intended departure, he heard a street-crier upon the Boulevard des Invalides an-

nounce "the condemnation to death and the execution of Louis Antoine de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien." M. de Chateaubriand could not, and, to his credit be it spoken, did not hesitate a moment; neither did his wife seek in any way to influence him. His resignation of the diplomatic post assigned to him was immediately written and carried to the Emperor, who ever after that used to style him "ce cerveau boulé de Chateaubriand."

We observed above, that between the Emperor and Chateaubriand indifference never established itself. The proofs of this statement are as manifest as they are curious, yet they are not generally known. We select a few. At the very time when Chateaubriand was regarded as a "marked man," as one with whom it was unwise to hold too intimate relations, Girodet, the painter, executed a splendid portrait of him. The exhibition of paintings was opened; and the director of the *Musée* thought it best not to allow the picture of Girodet to be exposed. Napoleon paid a state visit to the gallery; and in the midst of it asked, "Where is Girodet's portrait of Chateaubriand?" of which he had already heard through public report. Great was the perplexity of the courtier tribe; but the portrait was brought forth, and the Emperor, after examining for some time the likeness, which was rather darker in hue than even the original, turned away, saying, "He looks like a conspirator who has got sooty by sliding down a chimney."

But a much more remarkable act of Napoleon's took place in the year 1809. "The Martyrs" was published, and "by order" every newspaper in France abused the book, which the public devoured eagerly, and which raised its author's fame higher than ever. Hardly a few weeks elapsed, when a cousin of the illustrious historian, Armand de Chateaubriand, was seized, upon the pretext of an "illicit correspondence" with some members of the disaffected parties, and made to stand his trial before a court-martial. Madame de Rémusat applied to the Empress Josephine, whose influence was by that time much diminished. Chateaubriand went so far as to address to the sovereign himself a petition for his relative's life. The petition was delivered by Josephine to her husband,

read, and impatiently flung into the fire. Armand de Chateaubriand and his friend, M. de Goyon, were shot upon the plain of Grenelle, with no witnesses to their execution save the soldiers who put them to death; and upon this sad tragedy, an act of the most inhuman despotism, not one word was ever printed in the journals of the day. Not long after, the "Five Classes of the Institute of France" were called upon to make a report to the Emperor upon the works judged worthy of receiving the prizes his Majesty had awarded to such authors and inventors as should be pointed out to him by the Academy. Chateaubriand's was a name held too dangerous to be mentioned; therefore no allusion was hazarded to the only book which, for many years, had been read from one end of the country to the other. The Emperor found the report an absurd one, and signified that he would not distribute the prizes. A few weeks later, he caused his Minister of the Interior to ask of the director of the "Class of French Literature" at the Institute, why the reporters of the prize-works "had chosen to pass over in silence the *Génie du Christianisme*, that work being the subject of public attention, and having reached its seventh or eighth edition." It may be conceived what a delicate question this was for the Institute. The reply, however, was exacted, and was given in a most labored and tortuous style, — literary envy in some, and servility in nearly all, struggling against the current of what was almost universal admiration. At the same moment, Joseph Chénier, the Academician, died, and *unanimously* Chateaubriand was elected to the vacant *fauteuil*. On the evening of the day of the election, M. de Fontanes acquainted his imperial master with the occurrence. "Ah!" said Napoleon, smiling gravely, "you try to escape me, gentlemen of the Institute; you adopt the man, instead of the book. I, in turn, will see if there be not some means of giving the new member some high literary appointment, such as, for instance, a general direction of all the public libraries of the empire."

M. Villemain's book is full of the records of such facts as these. Those who are familiar with the nature of Bonaparte will find in it numerous points of view which will enable

them to examine it in a thoroughly new light; and as to the individuality of M. de Chateaubriand, it may be said to be revealed to the public for the first time. It is the *truth* spoken with regard to that famous personage, after the fables of his own Memoirs, given posthumously to the world. As a writer, the genius and influence of Chateaubriand are raised higher than they have ever been; as a man, he sinks down to his natural level of selfishness, vanity, and disingenuousness. Never was stricter or more absolute justice done to any one than has been done by Villemain to his subject, and assuredly never was it done in a more masterly style.

ART. V.—1. *A Memoir of His Honor Samuel Phillips, LL. D.*

By REV. JOHN L. TAYLOR. Boston: Congregational Board of Publication. 1856.

2. *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Phillips Exeter Academy for the Academic Year 1857-8.*

THE failure of a contributor to fulfil his engagement has prevented, until this late day, any notice in our pages of Mr. Taylor's Memoir of Judge Phillips. The intrinsic merits of the work, as well as the elevated character of its subject, deserve a larger space than we can even now bestow. We can do little more than to express our high sense of the research and fidelity of the writer, and our admiration of the "Christian statesman, scholar, and philanthropist" to whose intimacy he has introduced us. The ancestry and personal history of a man remarkable in all the relations of life, sketched in an appreciative spirit and with a skilful hand, are never without interest. Especially in these days, when politicians are publicly bought and sold at the Washington brokers' board, and quoted daily in the money articles of the commercial press like fancy railroad stock or copper-mine shares, it is pleasant, for the novelty of the thing, to contemplate the character of a patriot of the olden time. It is a consolation, too, to know, that the wealth which now flaunts